

If Your Dog Isn't One of These 12 Born-to-Run Breeds, Better Leave Him Home

Do you enjoy running with your dog? Make sure he or she is one of these 12 breeds that are considered natural runners or you may be asking for trouble. The three exceptions that should make you think twice before skipping out the door with your pup in tow.

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- If you're thinking about making your dog your jogging partner, it's important to realize that not every canine is a born runner
- Dogs that generally don't do well on prolonged runs include flat-faced breeds, dogs who haven't finished growing, older dogs and dogs with conditions that affect their mobility
- Dogs that tend to do well as running partners are often hunting and sporting breeds
- Before you take your dog running, get a clean bill of health on him from your vet, make sure he's well-conditioned and gets consistent exercise
- On runs with your dog, be sure to bring plenty of water for both of you, avoid extreme weather and temperatures and keep a close eye on your pet for signs of overheating or overexertion

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published June 30, 2017.

Many well-intentioned dog parents who are regular joggers decide the best way to exercise their pets is to enlist them as running partners. But there can be a problem with this, because while jogging is an excellent workout for many humans, it isn't the best choice for every dog.

It's important to make pet parents aware that prolonged trotting or running can create health problems for certain dogs. Not all canines are natural runners. For example, some dogs, especially brachycephalic (flat-faced) breeds, aren't physically equipped for running due to respiratory difficulties. Other dogs may be good sprinters, but lack the stamina for longer runs.

There can also be problems running with young dogs who haven't fully matured or dogs who are out of condition, as well as running on hard and/or hot surfaces, or in the heat of the day. Another issue can be dehydration when a pet parent underestimates the amount of water his canine companion will need on the run.

Dogs Who Aren't Suited to Jogging or Need Special Consideration

Generally speaking, brachy breeds are not good candidates for this activity, including the Pug, English Bulldog, French Bulldog, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Boston Terrier, Shih Tzu, Pekingese and more. Mutts can also have flat or "pushed in" faces depending on their breed mix.

Almost all flat-faced dogs have some degree of brachycephalic respiratory syndrome. They can't breathe normally due to the construction of their head and face, and they don't pant efficiently. Since panting is how dogs cool down, brachys are at very high risk for heat stroke.

If your dog is still growing, long jogs aren't a good idea because until he's reached skeletal maturity, his growth plates aren't fully closed and there's risk of injury. Most dogs have finished growing by about 1 year of age, but larger breeds can take up to 18 months.

If your dog is in her senior years, even if she's in good condition, you'll most likely need to adjust your pace and the distance you run to accommodate her changing needs. Dogs with orthopedic disease, arthritis or other mobility issues are usually not good candidates for running because it can exacerbate the underlying condition.

Breeds Born to Run

Dogs that do well as running partners often come from the working and sporting groups, and can include the following breeds and breed mixes:

- **Jack Russell Terrier** — Small in body but with energy to burn, the Jack Russell can run for surprisingly long intervals. And he's fast, reaching speeds up to 25 miles per hour (mph) in short bursts.
- **Brittany Spaniel** — The blazing fast Brittany is often called "the breeze." She's a medium-size sporting dog with high energy and a light build perfect for running.
- **Dalmatian** — Dalmatians were actually bred to run alongside carriages and horseback riders, so a love of running side-by-side with their humans is in their genes.
- **Greyhound** — With their long legs and sleek bodies, Greyhounds are built for speed and have been clocked at 45 mph. In between energetic bursts of speed-running, Greyhounds can be found napping on the couch.
- **Whippet** — The Whippet is thought to be a blend of Greyhound, Italian Greyhound and terrier. With that lineage, it's no wonder they're sometimes called "the poor man's racehorse." Believe it or not, a Whippet can run 200 yards in under 12 seconds!
- **German Shorthair Pointer** — This breed is athletic, with tremendous endurance, and those muscular hindquarters are custom-built for running. Since he requires exercise every day, he's the perfect companion for a long run or bike ride.
- **Standard Poodle** — Don't let the hairdo fool you — the Standard Poodle is loaded with energy and was originally bred as a gun dog and water retriever, making her an excellent partner for long runs.
- **Australian Cattle Dog** — This dog was bred to herd livestock on ranches in Australia, so a love of running is in her blood. She can go for miles, and she doesn't like to skip a day, so she's an excellent choice if you need occasional prodding to lace up your running shoes.
- **Airedale Terrier** — Airedales do well in hotter climates thanks to their short, wiry coats. This isn't a large or heavily muscled dog, so shorter runs (10 kilometers or less) are well suited to his energy level and stamina.

- **Border Collie** — Better known for their incredible intelligence and skill at flyball and agility events, Border Collies are also great runners and have been clocked at speeds up to 30 mph.
- **Weimaraner** — The agile "grey ghost" is adaptable to all types of running. She excels at short, quick bursts of speed and can cover long distances just as easily. Her short coat makes running in warm weather a breeze, and she's also confident on rough terrain and trails.
- **Siberian Husky** — If you live in a cold climate, a **Husky** is the perfect running companion. This dog was bred to pull sleds, so endurance running is in his blood.

The Basics — Health Checkup, Conditioning, Consistency and the Right Diet

Before you start jogging with your dog, make sure to get a clean bill of health from your veterinarian to insure your four-legged workout partner is good to go. Make sure to tell your vet how often you plan to jog with your dog, and the average distance of your runs.

One of the keys to your dog's ability to comfortably and safely run with you is consistency. To stay in good condition he needs daily exercise. If you give him minimal daily exercise and then take him for a 5-mile run once every few weeks, you're asking for an injury or health problem.

Like people, dogs need consistent exercise to maintain muscle tone and cardiovascular fitness. When you run with your dog, you'll want to move at a pace that elevates his heart rate (for about 20 minutes per session) without leading to overexertion.

While all dogs must be fed a nutritionally balanced, fresh food diet, canine athletes do especially well on unprocessed food because of the vast amount of ligament-supporting minerals and naturally occurring glucosamine found in fresh food. All canine athletes, including dogs that consistently run, must be on some type of chondroprotective agent to support joint health over time.

Safe Running Tips

When you head out for a run with your dog, it's crucially important that you bring enough water for both of you. Your dog keeps her body temp down through panting, which means she's losing water and getting dehydrated very quickly. She'll need more water than you do while exercising, in fact, about twice as much.

You can carry a collapsible pet water bowl on your runs, or buy a special dog-friendly adapter that attaches to the top of your water bottle so she can drink right from your bottle. If your dog will be on leash, use either a head collar or no-pull harness. A leash clipped to a traditional collar can risk injury to your dog's neck or back if she pulls. And skip retractable leashes, which may lead to injuries. Use a 6-foot flat leash instead.

Don't run in the heat of the day, keeping in mind that your dog can't cool his body as efficiently as you can. In addition, running on hot pavement can burn his paws. Don't run with your dog on very cold, wet or windy days as well. Snow and ice can pose a risk of injury (including slipping), and some dogs don't tolerate cold weather well.

Finally, keep a close eye on your dog during your runs and adapt your speed, route and hydration stops as necessary to suit your dog. She should be running alongside or slightly in front of you. If she drops behind you, the run is too intense for her. You'll need to work up to longer runs slowly, increasing your mileage by no more than about 10% each

week.

Sources and References

The Atlantic, May 17, 2017

